

LESSON 24: JOHN 15:1-17
FEBRUARY 6, 2019

OVERVIEW

- . The symbolism of the vine – John 15:1-6
- . Conditions and privileges of abiding in Christ – John 15:7-17

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE VINE – JOHN 15:1-6

- . In relation to the Old Testament
 - . Many times through the Old Testament prophets, God described His people Israel as a “vine”
 - . The vine became the symbol of spiritual Israel
 - . It was engrained on the coins of the Maccabees
 - . Herod’s temple - famous for its great golden vine on the door
 - . The vine also became the symbol for Israel’s spiritual failure
 - . “Israel is an empty vine” – Hosea 10:1
 - . Isaiah 5:1-7
- . In relation to Jesus and His disciples
 - . Jesus is the vine and His disciples are the branches
 - . Together they would embody the new humanity to bring forth the “much fruit” of righteousness on earth for which man was created
 - . Just as the branches draw their life from the vine, so the disciples will draw their life from Christ
 - . The vine and the branches are inseparable because they share one life
- . In relation to God, the gardener – John 15:1
 - . Jesus describes God as the gardener
 - . The gardener owns the vineyard, plants the vine, prunes the vine and burns the dead branches
- . In relation to fruit bearing – John 15:2-6
 - . God wants branches to bring forth fruit
 - . He has given us the healthiest of vines in Christ
 - . He has created an environment that gives each branch the best chance to bear fruit
 - . Purging us of deadwood, is like putting trials in our path
 - . Just as pruning can cause some temporary stress to the plant, so too can trials
 - . If we put our trust in God, and turn these trials over to Him, He will use the situation to strengthen us, which can lead to new, more abundant fruit

- . "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you"
 - . This spiritual pruning is brought on by symbolic cleansing
 - . Through God's Word, Jesus helps the disciples see where how all people need the circumcision of the heart – to be made pure through the desire to be obedient to God's Word
 - . Though the disciples were not yet possessors of the Spirit, they had already made this confession of the heart, making them spiritually clean
- . "Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain (abide) in me"
 - . To turn from Christ is the same as being cut from the branch
 - . Not all branches bear fruit
 - . The symbolism is that there are those who may believe in some aspects of Jesus, that are thus connected to the vine, but have little fruit to show for it
 - . A branch bearing no fruit is a branch that will eventually be pruned by the gardener
 - . Pruned branches will be thrown away and burned
- . "If a man remains (abides) in me he will bear much fruit"
 - . Fruitfulness is the manifestation of Christ like character
 - . Bearing fruit is foundational to our faith
 - . "I will know you by your fruit"
 - . The fruit of the Spirit includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control – Galatians 5:22-23

CONDITIONS AND PRIVILEGES OF ABIDING IN CHRIST – JOHN 15:7-17

- . The privilege of answered prayer – John 15:7
 - . Only through, intentional, daily, thoughtful prayer, combined with an earnest desire, to study and understand God's Word, can we better align our thoughts and wishes with God's will for our life
 - . As we grow in our understanding of who God is, His Words and truths will better remain in us
 - . We will begin to see things as He sees them
 - . Ultimately our prayers will begin to align themselves more with how He sees our condition
 - . If our ultimate, heartfelt aim is to give ourselves over to Him and glorify Him through our actions, then why wouldn't He grant our prayers
- . The privilege of consciously glorifying God – John 15:8
 - . Realized human fulfillment can never be experienced in its full spiritual and eternal sense outside the sphere of abiding in Christ

- . In the context of which Christ is saying this, picture yourself, as the branch, apart from the vine
 - . We are made for God and to glorify Him
 - . One's heart is restless until one finds rest in God through Christ
- . Nothing pleases God more than when we bear fruit that causes others to see God's love and joy
- . We are made for God and to glorify Him
- . We can best do this when we become one with Christ

- . The privilege of personal awareness of God's love – John 15:9-10
 - . This awareness is best realized when we are acting in obedience with His commands
 - . We can not adequately obey Him until we first know Him
 - . As our relationship with God grows, we want to show our love for Him through our obedience
 - . Many times this obedience flies in the face of our human desire
 - . Choosing God over self will help to magnify God's love, further fueling us to persevere

- . The privilege of possessing Jesus' joy – John 15:11
 - . "You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness, therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy" – Hebrews 1:9
 - . Often times we focus on the suffering Jesus endured for our sake, without thinking about the great joy He felt in pleasing God
 - . He also understood how His actions would bring us all closer to God
 - . He loved us so much that this sacrifice brought Him great joy
 - . Jesus promises to share this gift of joy in all circumstances with the believer who abides in Him

- . The privilege of experiencing the love of others – John 15:12-14
 - . Jesus has feelings for and loves all those we come in contact with
 - . Regardless of our feelings towards our fellow human beings, Jesus is ready to show us how He sees and loves those people
 - . What greater feeling is there than to surrender our thoughts and emotions over to Jesus so that He can put His Words of love towards others, on our lips and in our thoughts
 - . In the same way, think about the great joy we feel when someone else expresses that same depth of love for us
 - . Let God love others through you even to the extent of your laying down a part of your life to do it

- . The privilege of being called Christ's friend – John 15:15
 - . If you are a believer, Jesus calls you His friend, taking you into His confidence concerning all things that His Father told Him
- . The privilege of power to produce fruit that remains – John 15:16
 - . "Only one life, twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last"
 - . This quote appears of the gravestone of a young girl, from Dover, England, who died at the young age of seventeen
 - . It was a life that numbered short in years, but a life that saw an abundance of spiritual fruit that deeply impacted the lives of others
 - . How will we ultimately measure the impact of our lives

NEXT LESSON – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2019 – JOHN 15:18-16:4